LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of Labour Unity
Founded 1921
Editor: R. Palme Dutt

Breakers Ahead ★ R. Page Arnot

Crisis in Motors ★ Peter Kerrigan

A New Atmosphere ★ Camille Huysmans

The New 'Socialism' ★ Sancho Panza

★

Letters from Mrs. Marx

August 1956

One Shilling and Sixpence

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AGE AND ADVANCE

OUTSTANDING event for all of us here, as I mentioned briefly last month, was our 35th Anniversary celebration gathering. Editorial Board members and staff have been unanimous in their verdicts on this happy and fruitful gathering. Happy in that bonds of friendship forged with pen and ink, were cemented: fruitful in the fund of good will, encouragement and practical proposals for advancement of *Labour Monthly's* purpose: Labour unity.

Not all our friends could come, but their letters were typical of the spirit of the occasion. Regretting that 'I cannot be with you', Alderman Fred Henderson sent a message of greeting: 'I shall be with you in spirit and in sharing with your guests the debt we all owe to *Labour Monthly* as the outstanding exponent of our Labour unity of world-wide working class liberation from capitalist exploitation'. 'Let us be very clear', he says, 'about the basic change in the character of human civilisation. . . . The coming of mechanisation has revolutionised the physical processes of production. . . . It has changed the natural process of human living from scarcity to vast abundance; and has —for the first time in human history —made cultural life based on human leisure, abundance and freedom from toil, possible for all men: a change which has made the coming of classless society, as the normal structure of human civilisation, inevitable. It is upon the devising, as rapidly as possible, of ways and means to that end that we should now be concentrating the thought and action of the world; and creating a world unity of working class purpose and understanding of the final liberation from exploitation involved in it for us'.

To redeem my promise of last month, here are one or two of the practical suggestions put to us, fruit of the thought and action of readers who share with Alderman Henderson and with L.M. the purpose of building working class unity, the first from a skilled Glassblower (celebrating *his* 35th anniversary as a *reader*!): 'This is not just an idea I have just cooked up, but have tried it out in practice. In London there are over 100 small districts similar to postal areas. In any one of these get one or two friends who reside in that part. Let these two friends then sit down and over a cup of tea get pencil and paper and draw up a list of people in their area who *ought* to read *Labour Monthly*. In less than an hour about 30 names will appear on the paper. On analysis it will be found that most of these are in this or that section of the labour movement and most of whom are known to you. Next evening go to the house of the first name on the list and explain to him—or her—how L.M. can keep them up-to-date on current affairs. Listen to what they have to say. As most people spend quite a lot on reading matter it will help if it is pointed out that its price, *1s. 6d.*, is spread over a month.

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Notes of the Month

Breakers Ahead

R. PAGE ARNOT*

IT is now twenty-two months since the Chancellor of the Exchequer, then Mr. R. A. Butler, no doubt with an eye on a forthcoming general election, held out the prospect of doubling the standard of life in Britain in 25 years. It was an alluring promise. Did anyone believe it then? Does anyone believe it now? On the contrary, the rise in prices since that smiling prophecy has been so steep that every housewife is more and more worried as each month goes by, and every father of a family is concerned lest the standard of life should go down; everyone on a fixed income such as a pension is hard hit; while as for the old age pensioners on forty shillings a week, their straitened position and meagre sustenance has become a standing reproach to the government. No matter, Mr. Butler and his Tory colleagues were successful in the general election of fifteen months ago. Once the election was over, the tune was changed: no more glowing descriptions of a radiant future but grave

*The Editor will resume the Notes of the Month in the next issue.

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warnings of harsh measures to meet financial crisis. For in fact the recurring financial crisis, which hit Britain every two years since the end of the war (but through special circumstances missing 1953) has come again. The remedy was to be the credit-squeeze (begun earlier with the first raising of the bank-rate) now to be intensified. A high bank-rate, in the past a familiar method of making the rich richer and the poor poorer, was to be supplemented by a supplementary autumn Budget, when further taxes would be imposed, purchase taxes on consumption goods. Rising prices, said the government spokesmen, were a sign of inflation: to stop inflation they proposed to raise prices higher still. Not for a moment was there any suggestion to cut down the huge overseas military 'commitments', which in themselves were enough to upset the balance of payments with the outside world: on the contrary the military expenditure overseas was at the same time to be stepped up by sending more troops to Cyprus. That brought us to the end of 1955, first year of Mr. Butler's quarter century that was to end in doubling our standard of living.

Mr. Macmillan the Chancellor

January, 1956, brought a new Chancellor of the Exchequer. Mr. Macmillan, jaded from Geneva where he had spent those October mornings with Mr. Dulles, getting his words pat, before his stonewalling performance in the afternoons, took over from Mr. Butler. But, as may be judged from his Geneva performance (which effectively blocked the efforts of the Soviet foreign minister to bring further relaxation of international tension) Mr. Macmillan was not one to cut the enormous cost (nearly £1,500,000,000 a year) of the cold war in any way. Instead he took over exactly where Butler left off: and in February of this year he stiffened the hire purchase restrictions, took steps to raise prices further: and, as if to make sure that every child should be aware of him, he made bread and milk a bit dearer. At the same time he never failed in his speeches to say that the rise in prices must be stopped. These Tory Chancellors of the Exchequer, themselves such adepts at simplified presentation of what they tell us are complicated matters, can hardly object if their argument is put as follows:

> Children are drinking too much milk (not too much for their own health, but too much for the health of the national finances). If milk is dearer, they will drink less: then the milk that is left over can be processed into casein and the casein can be manufactured into buttons, which we have already offered in advanced as an export to Soviet Russia.

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Or, again, it might be put this way:

> Children are eating too much bread (too much, that is, for healthy finance). If bread is dearer, they will eat less. Then we shall import less wheat from the U.S.A.: and shall not have to pay out so many dollars.

Or, if Mr. Macmillan were to protest that it was not fairly put and that he has *merely* swept away the bread and milk subsidies, could we then put his argument as follows:

> People are spending too much on motor cars. Credit-squeeze and higher purchase tax and screwing down H.P. terms will make cars much dearer. Then people won't buy them. Then all these lovely cars will go for export.

But this, as it turns out, is only the first stage in the argument. For the answer comes that German cars are capturing the Scandinavian market from Britain. So the argument concludes differently:

> Since I made cars dearer, fewer are being sold. Therefore fewer are being made. Therefore the motor manufacturers won't employ so many workers. Therefore workers in motors will be unemployed, until they can find work elsewhere. Where? Somewhere where they can make lovely guns or lovely something else for export.
>
> And since motor cars have rubber tyres, workers in the rubber industry won't be needed so much, and they will be unemployed too. Think of that! And besides then they won't need so much raw rubber. That will be a great saving in imports.

In the House of Commons debate on 'the economic policies of Her Majesty's Government', what Mr. Macmillan actually said was

> In recent years, almost the whole of the expanded output of motor cars had gone to the home market. It was obviously necessary in the national interest that there should be some shifting of resources from the motor industry to other industries, at any rate until the industry could expand its earning power and exports. (July 3, 1956.)

Unemployment

So, the cat is out of the bag—the bag that bore the device 'Danger of inflation', or 'Overspending at home', 'The vicious spiral', 'Pricing ourselves out of the market', 'Financial crisis' and all the other labels that were stuck on it as it was passed from one ministerial spokesman to another. So here we have it, unemployment (now politely called redundancy), unemployment that is deliberately created by the government, unemployment queues spreading through the Midlands and then reaching out to the other trades dependent on motor manufacture. So here is the 'cure for inflation', as worked out by government spokesmen and once more uttered in the parliamentary debate on July 3 in their retort to the opposition motion that the government policies 'provide no solution for the economic problems facing the nation'. It was not in the Labour motion to

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the debate but in the *Daily Herald* editorial comment next day that an obvious if belated answer was given. That it was thus given (though in July and not in the Budget debates of three months earlier, when all the Labour members and official periodicals kept mum about this obvious argument which has been repeatedly put forward in this magazine) is of considerable importance. Better late than never. Here is what the *Daily Herald* said:

> The major cause of the inflation—which, however, it seems, does not keep the smug Macmillan awake at nights—is the arms burden, our military commitments, conscription, Cyprus and the whole monstrous distortion they impose on our economy. (*July 4, 1956.*)

'Monstrous Distortion'

Now, since this 'monstrous distortion' was in effect admitted by Mr. Macmillan himself in his famous 'pipe-dream' speech of May 16 (quoted in the Notes of the Month for July) where he said that if the arms burden were reduced by less than half its amount, it would mean 'a saving of £700,000,000' and that half of that again would be quite enough to 'completely transform our foreign balances', it is clear that something else lies behind the insistence on creating unemployment. Mr. Macmillan may disclaim any ulterior motive, may loftily deal as he did in the July 3 debate with the suggestion

> that the Government were deliberately planning at creating a position of unemployment to break the power of the unions.

and say with all the accents of sincerity

> If that were not such a palpably false charge it would, indeed, be a wounding one.

Mr. Harold Macmillan may, indeed, be sincere: or there may not, indeed, be in his brain sufficient depth of ulteriority to hide a motive; or, finally, there may be a motive which, in the familiar manner of Tory speakers, he has hidden from himself. In any case it is not of material importance. What is important is that Mr. Macmillan is himself only the unconscious puppet of superior forces, of forces within British monopoly capitalism that are driving towards a goal in which the creation of unemployment is an essential element. The motive of which Mr. Macmillan was or was not fully conscious on July 3 was on the same day revealed with stark clarity in *The Times.*

The Rigid State

Under the title 'the rigid state', there was laid down in the editorial of *The Times* the present programme of the driving forces within British capitalism. First, the cause of 'our economic ills'

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was to be found by going back 'far beyond any immediate actions or policies', in a general tendency which 'the demands of the Second World War clamped down into a system'. This is 'the rigid state'. It may be noted that this covers at least these last fifteen years of full employment. Secondly, the argument goes on, 'rigidity' can be cured or removed by its opposite, by 'flexibility'. Everybody and everything, it appears, has been 'rigid', does not want to be 'flexible'. The point of this seemingly ponderous utterance is made sharply clear by the first example given.

> The workers are set on fighting for higher wages and shorter hours but are not prepared to accept the inconveniences of the industrial flexibility necessary to obtain them.

A later example is that 'the present rate of British consumption' (which covers the standard of living of the working class, the overwhelming majority of the population) is referred to scornfully as having 'become a kind of sacred cow', and treated as 'sacrosanct'.

Recipe for Flexibility

The Times, well known for its generally rebellious attitude to 'sacrosanctity', and as one that has never bowed down to any cow, however sacred or anointed, then gives in quick-fire sentences what is required to be done so that Britain's 'position as a great trading nation' be 'enhanced', as follows:

> Deflation must be firmly held to. Courage was shown when it was announced, but far more courage is needed now it is beginning to work. But deflation on its own is not enough.
>
> Flexibility must be restored on many other fronts besides the labour one. Rents should be made realistic quickly. . . .

('Realistic rents' as expounded in a follow-up editorial on July 13 means very high rents and the scrapping of rent restriction.)

> The anomalous position—which is likely to become worse—whereby unemployment pay sustains short-time workers in refusing to transfer their labour should be summarily ended.
>
> The trade unions should abandon their opposition to redundancy and concentrate on compensation and on methods of encouraging mobility.
>
> Rigidity of every kind, including restrictive practices by both sides of industry, must be jettisoned.

But this is not to exhaust the list. Warning is given by *The Times,* in its best Harley Street manner, that

> There will have to be many other similar, some perhaps painful, measures before a truly energetic and resilient economy is restored. . . . What is needed is a shock—the shock of a drastic but courageous cure.

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Creating Unemployment

Well, you have been warned. Finally it is stated that

> Britain, if she is to prosper, has to be led into this new, challenging, potentially rewarding, but highly competitive world. (*The Times*, 3.7.56.)

'Highly competitive world'—these last three words give the clue to this capitalist programme for deflation (creating unemployment), for higher rents, for cutting off unemployment benefit to short-time workers and the rest. The meaning of it all is repulsively clear. British capitalism's preparation to compete in the world market is to take the shape of cutting costs of production primarily by lowering the standard of life of the working class. To break the resistance to this programme, it is necessary to break the power of the unions. For this every device will be tried; but in the end they will rely upon the spread of unemployment in whatever industry they consider necessary. They will risk its spread to industries where they do not as yet consider it necessary. Once there is 'enough' unemployment, they can go ahead with the rest of their programme. It is the programme for an employers' offensive.

Capitalist Offensive Campaigns

The capitalist offensive campaign to worsen conditions in order to get all the profit they can is not anything new. In one sense it goes on all the time in a guerilla way. But since the first world war there has been more than one occasion that could be singled out as a concerted offensive. The first began in 1921. After the first world war the boom in trade and industry went on for up to two years following the armistice of November, 1918. Profits were enormous. Prices mounted up from month to month until in November, 1920, the cost of living was nearly thrice what it had been at the outbreak of war in August, 1914—just forty-two years ago. Climbing wage-rates could not overtake the speed of the price-rise. But by the late autumn of 1920 unemployment had begun to spread rapidly and with the opening months of 1921 the figure of workers unemployed had leapt upwards towards a million. With the spring of 1921 the employers launched an offensive which went on for well over a year. It began with the three-month national lock-out of the miners (April to June, 1921) and went on to the national lock-out of members of the Amalgamated Engineering Union from mid-March to mid-June, 1922, and beyond that. Neither the miners in 1921 nor the engineers in 1922 received the support that had been expected from the other workers: and in each case the unions suffered defeat. Other trades

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had soon to suffer heavy wage-cuts. The lesson of the need for workers' solidarity in face of an employers' offensive was painfully driven home. Other lessons can still be learned from that historic struggle of 1921-22. But in one respect there is a big difference from the situation that seems to be looming ahead today. For though the Lloyd George coalition government of that period worked hand-in-glove with the employers it did not create the unemployment, as the present Tory government has done.

Winston Churchill's Deflation, 1925

The present deflating Tories in the government are not, however, the first at the game. It was Winston Churchill as Chancellor of the Exchequer who thirty-one years ago set out to carry through deflation. His measures of deflation in the late spring of 1925 were taken as the signal for an employers' offensive of which the slogan was given by the Tory Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin in the words: 'All the workers of this country have got to take reductions in wages to help put industry on its feet'. Churchill's deflation (in the form of the pound sterling going on to the gold standard) upset the export or 'unsheltered' trades and created 'an atmosphere favourable to the reduction of wages'. But the economist J. M. Keynes, then his opponent, warned Churchill that if he persisted in his deflationary scheme, he would 'have to see to it that there is unemployment in the sheltered trades also', and revealed the meaning of deflation in a phrase that remains valid for the situation today:

> By means of restriction of credit by the Bank of England you can deliberately intensify unemployment to any required degree, until wages *do* fall.

Between Churchill as Chancellor of the Exchequer in a Tory government and his successors Butler and Macmillan thirty years later there is not so much difference: in each case the measures taken were bound to create unemployment and be the signal for an employers' offensive. The brunt of the offensive fell once more upon the miners, to cut their wages and lengthen their hours of labour. But in the industrial struggle of summer 1925 there was a big difference from the struggle of 1921. The other workers, heedful of Baldwin's slogan, rallied to the support of the miners with the result that on Friday, July 31, 1925 ('Red Friday'), the government and the employers had to give way. Their offensive was spoiled. And, though in the next year when the common front had been broken the miners were forced on to lower wages and longer hours, it was at the cost of a prolonged industrial struggle the memory of

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which was never forgotten by Churchill throughout the rest of his political activity—nor by any other of that older generation of Tories. Mr. Macmillan in the pride of his comparative youth may have forgotten this. May we remind him of it?

The Motor Industry

Today in the motor industry we have a pattern of events not unlike what happened in those far-off days when coal was a staple export. First, deflationary measures (the restriction of credit by raising the bank-rate—usually called the credit-squeeze), second, following upon it, unemployment. In the article by Peter Kerrigan in this number of the magazine the stages of this 'crisis in motors' are compactly traced, together with the actions of the motor workers and the development of trade union policy in the course of the struggle. From what is there related, no less than from his conclusions, our readers cannot fail to notice the very great importance of the recent union decisions. When the fourteen trade unions concerned in the British Motor Corporation's abrupt dismissal of 6,000 workers on July 14 agreed on a strike, the statement issued by the chairman, H. G. Brotherton, was significantly worded, as follows:

> It is agreed that in the event of the continued refusal of the B.M.C. either to reinstate the 6,000 dismissed workers or to afford adequate compensation, and to give assurance of full consultation in the future, all labour will be withdrawn from B.M.C. factories on and from July 23.

Whatever the upshot, this was an historic decision. It laid down the principle that the worker has a right to the job and that otherwise he must be compensated for the loss of it. That the claim was made marks an advance in trade union policy. It is nearly fifty years since Keir Hardie brought forward his right-to-work bill in the House of Commons, amid the jeers of the capitalist press. It is nearly forty years since the victory of the workers in the Russian Revolution led to the framing of a constitution which assured to all the right (and the obligation) to work, to be followed by similar constitutions in a series of countries since the war ended. It is in line with these modern developments that the Amalgamated Engineering Union, the Transport and General Workers Union and the other twelve unions have taken this forward step.

The Parliamentary Opposition

It would be pleasant if a similar advance of policy could be recorded throughout the labour movement. On the parliamentary side, however, there are as yet few developments. At a time when

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the situation of the motor workers demands the strongest support from every section, it is a pity that the opportunity was not seized (in the economic debate on July 3 in the House of Commons) to make mincemeat of the Tory pretensions, to show that the balance of payments can be put right by a stroke of the pen, simply by halving that arms burden which devours one-eleventh of the whole British national income as compared with the one-twentieth which the other Western allies pay out. It was the *Daily Herald* that said this the next day: but it would have been a more effective help to the engineers and others if the members of parliament had also said it the night before. From this point made against the Tory policy, they could have gone on to show that, once the foreign balances are restored in this way, there remains no vestige of reason for the credit-squeeze except as a means to create unemployment in preparation for an employers' offensive. But it was not done: and until the parliamentary party comes out against the burden of arms, which loads this country beyond any other; and by its upset of the foreign balances gives the Tories a false pretext for their deflationary, unemployment-creating and ultimately wage-cutting policy, they will not be doing the job of a parliamentary opposition nor giving to the trade unions the support that is due from them. After all, the trade unions support the Labour Party: why shouldn't the Labour Party in parliament support the unions?

Newspapers as 'Sturm-Abteilungen'

Hitler and the Nazis in Germany used storm-troopers to beat up those of whom they disapproved, a category which covered not so much their active opponents (for these it was the headsman's axe or the concentration camp) but German citizens going about their lawful vocations including ordinary trade unionists. The handful of rich men whose interests come first with the Tory Government rely on quite different methods. Those of whom these millionaires disapprove are assailed by the newspapers, whose owners also are mostly millionaires. Any trade union (or any trade union leader) incurring the displeasure of the big bosses is liable to be beaten up, figuratively, by the millionaire press. If in addition a trade union secretary or executive member happens to be advanced in his political opinions (and certainly if he is a Communist) then he and his trade union are subjected to a creeping barrage by the press artillery. This was always the case to some extent. But especially with this Tory Government it seems to have become worse: and the notion, so often scouted, that members of the government are linked up with

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these 'storm-troopers', was given countenance on the second of July by Mr. Macmillan's warm praise of one millionaire sheet. During this critical situation in motors attack after attack has been launched on trade unionists and on union officials, whether shop-stewards or district-committee men or national officials, to an unprecedented extent. This behaviour of newspapers (and also of the B.B.C.) is reaching a stage where it is becoming a serious interference with the democratic rights of trade unions and trade unionists. The unions will have to see to it and consider what steps can be taken to abate the nuisance. For if one thing is certain, it is that it would be folly to take it lying down.

July 16, 1956.

CRISIS IN MOTORS

PETER KERRIGAN

THE motor and commercial vehicle industry, repair shops and firms producing accessories now employs approximately 800,000 workers. Its growth has been impressive. In 1924 116,000 cars were produced. In 1939, 305,000. By 1955 car output was 897,000 plus 341,000 lorries and buses. Of these a total of 530,000 vehicles was exported. The position of Britain as the largest vehicle exporting country in the world is now very seriously challenged by the United States, which exported 428,000 vehicles in 1955; and West Germany, whose exports were 298,000 in 1954 and had jumped to 404,000 in 1955 edging Britain out of traditional markets in Scandinavia and elsewhere. West Germany now exports 44·4 per cent of her total production as against 42·8 per cent for Britain and 4·7 per cent by U.S.

Britain's position has greatly changed since before the war. Then she produced mainly for the home market. After the war production was predominantly for export. Between 1950 and 1953 there were examples of redundancy and efforts by employers at speed-up with strikes against dismissals and victimisation in the car industry. Production and exports increased during 1954 and 1955, although ominous clouds began to gather over the industry.

Six major firms produce over 90 per cent of Britain's vehicle output. Of these Ford of Dagenham and Vauxhall of Luton are American owned; the other four are British Motor Corporation (B.M.C.), Rootes Group, Standard, and Rover. During 1955 big

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schemes of capital development were announced by all. Ford's is to cost £65 million; Vauxhall's £36 million; B.M.C.'s £9 million; Roote's £14½ million; Rover's £3 million. A feature of the drive to increase production has been the growth of automation. All these new projects envisage big developments here. The effects are staggering. Take the example of Briggs (now part of Ford, Dagenham) where 291,400 vhicles were produced in 1954, and the number of vehicles built in 1955 was 340,000. That is nothing. The new press shop to be erected will have 60 major presses and, together with the old press shop will have a productive capacity for 800,000 vehicles per year working a two-shift day and 40-hour week with a total labour force of 250. This compares with the present labour force of 250 producing parts for less than 200,000 vehicles per year. In another sector, the door line, whereas 35 men complete a cycle of assembly at the rate of 100 doors per hour by old methods, the new methods mean 10 men will produce 300 doors per hour. B.M.C. (a fusion of Austin and Morris) gives another example of the productivity drive:

> The car assembly plant at the Austin Motor Company is another triumph for automation. There in a great hall, 1½ furlongs in length, three conveyors set the pace for the whole of the factory and, incidentally, for all the supplying firms outside. This plant represents one of the major forward steps towards complete automatic control.
>
> (Woolland, *Principles of Mass and Flow Production*, Iliffe, 1954.)

These examples of the effect of automation which could be multiplied from Vauxhall, Standard, etc., need to be borne in mind.

Despite increasing foreign competition and the slump in car sales in U.S. with large scale lay-offs during 1955, the Tory government drove ahead with its credit-squeeze policy. Butler's October budget increased purchase tax on motor cars. In February Macmillan introduced more severe hire purchase restrictions. The government refused to withdraw the trade bans on the sale of tractors, cars and other vehicles to China and other countries behind the so-called iron curtain.

At Christmas, 1955, came the announcement by B.M.C. of short time working for its 18,000 workers at the Austin factory, Birmingham: they went on to a four-day week. Then Morris Commercial Cars did the same. Projectile Engineering dismissed workers engaged on chassis for B.M.C., Thrupp and Mabberly, London, worked four days; Smiths, M.A.1 and 2, London, stopped or reduced overtime. Vauxhall dismissed workers. B.L.S.P. put 780 workers on a four-day week. Short time working was intro-

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duced at Rootes. There was redundancy at Daimler and Rover and production cuts at Standard. The first announcements were that it was 'due to merely current market conditions, seasonal fluctuations, etc.'. But it has gone on and become more serious.

Early in February the Standard Company told shop stewards that 2,500 of the 12,000 workers would be laid off from mid-May to September owing to a change in tractor production. Car production would be speeded up, overtime should be worked and by mid-August most would be back at work. The shop stewards who wanted every worker to remain in employment proposed as an alternative:

> (1) That jobs common to both tractors should continue to run during the change over; (2) That jobs which could be quickly changed over should be proceeded with; (3) That holidays should be staggered to allow a percentage of workers to be absorbed by this means; (4) That three shifts should be introduced on car jobs; and (5) That short time should be worked throughout the company's factories so that the maximum number of men affected could be absorbed.

The Company's reply, given on April 25 at a works conference, was a bombshell. They stated that the figures for the lay-off originally given had been affected because car sales had failed to reach the anticipated target and would, therefore, have to be increased; 2,240 would now be redundant at the Banner Lane factory and 1,250 at Canley. In the course of these negotiations Mr. Alec Dick, Managing Director of Standard, was asked about the fear that all the 3,490 men laid off would not be re-employed. He said: 'We are not installing £4 million worth of equipment in order to employ the same number of men. We can't carry people for fun'. The workers answered this action of the Company by going on strike on April 26. Standard are 100 per cent trade union and the strike was 100 per cent solid. It lasted until May 9, when the executives of the unions instructed the men to go back as the employers had agreed to negotiate.

Meantime, at Norton Motors, 26 men were dismissed and a strike against redundancy and dismissals began on April 30. On May 15 the firm announced that those who did not return to work within a week would be dismissed. On May 23 the lockout began and on May 29 the A.E.U. decided to recognise the dispute as official and the number involved rose to approximately 500.

At Standard negotiations at local level went on until the management agreed on May 24 to operate a four-day week at the car factory, taking on 1,000 from the tractor factory, but refused to

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agree to a union proposal that a further 1,000 should be maintained by a rota-week off at the car factory and those laid off should get a £6 guaranteed minimum. On May 30 the firm announced that 2,600 would be made redundant and offered £15 tax free compensation to each man if he stayed at work till his notice expired. The shop stewards met and passed a resolution asking the union executives to call them out on strike. Instead of calling the men out the union executives decided on June 6 to ask the Minister of Labour to intervene. He met them but refused to bring any pressure on the firm, although he arranged to convey their views to the firm. This was done and a further meeting took place. The company varied the dismissal notices, but the first batch of dismissals took place. The unions met again and decided to ask the men if they were prepared to take action. If they were the union executives were apparently prepared to bring them out again.

At this stage a new and dramatic development occurred. On Wednesday, June 27, the B.M.C. announced that on Friday, June 29, they were sacking 6,000 workers from various factories in Birmingham, Oxford and Wales. They were giving a week's wages in lieu of notice. The largest number to be dismissed was 3,000 in Austin, Birmingham, while 700 more were sacked at Nuffield Metal Products, Birmingham. Fisher and Ludlows and the smaller Nuffield Tractors and Transmissions in Birmingham contributed their quota to the dismissals. At the same time Standards, who had agreed to further discussions with the unions, reversed their policy, saying they could not negotiate 'under duress'. On Thursday, June 28, the Australian government announced a cut in car imports by 50 per cent.

Mass meetings were held by the B.M.C. workers on Thursday and Friday, June 28 and 29. On Thursday night the 1,000 workers on night shift at Nuffield Metal Products stopped work and on Friday morning the rest of the 3,000 came out. The Austin workers held a series of meetings and decided that on Tuesday, July 3 (the factory was on short time and did not work Monday), all workers, including those dismissed should present themselves for work. If the dismissed workers were not allowed to start in any department all should walk out. At every meeting in Birmingham and Oxford resolutions were passed asking the union executives to call them out officially on strike.

On Monday, July 2, the management at Nuffield Metal Products agreed to negotiate on the dismissals and local union officials persuaded the 3,000 to go back, which they did, but without their

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dismissed colleagues. On Tuesday morning, July 3, approximately 4,000 workers on the West Side of Austin walked out when their dismissed colleagues were refused jobs. There was considerable confusion. Again the management agreed to negotiate and the Austin men went back. Next morning about 3,000 of them struck again but went back when it was announced this would prevent negotiations at a national level between a delegation of four national officials of the ten unions concerned whom the management had agreed to meet. This meeting on Wednesday, July 4, was a fiasco. The management flatly refused to reinstate any of the 6,000 and equally callously turned down a proposal for compensation. The stewards and workers were extremely incensed and sent resolutions (as did the Birmingham District Committee of the A.E.U.) to the union executives urging the unions to call out all the remaining 48,000 workers employed by B.M.C.

The union executives held an emergency meeting of representatives on Friday, July 6, under the chairmanship of Mr. J. R. Scott (E.C. member of the A.E.U.). They decided to recommend to a conference of union executives to be held on Monday, July 9, that they 'seriously consider' action to save the men's jobs and establish the right of compensation if workers are fired. Mr. Scott, senior executive council member of the A.E.U., said the Monday meeting would discuss a recommendation on action in the factories on the claim for continuous employment and for adequate compensation where workers were sacked. He explained that this could mean stoppages embracing all workers in factories or sections of a factory. 'The Union Executive Councils will interpret what action should mean'.

On Wednesday, July 4, the Norton Company dismissed all the workers who were on strike and although Standard announced they would not proceed at once with the dismissal of the last 1,100 men who were on notice, but would hold them over for another week, till July 12, there was a spate of announcements of dismissals in firms serving the motor car industry. These ranged from the India Tyre Company in Renfrew, Scotland, to the 400 given notice by Smiths, London, and including 500 sacked at Fort Dunlop Works of the Dunlop Rubber Company. Redundancy has now spread to Vauxhall, which has announced its intention to dismiss between 600 and 700 workers.

The workers continue to fight back. On Saturday, July 7, well over 1,000 shop stewards from Coventry and Birmingham car

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factories met the Midland Labour M.P.s. They passed resolutions to the executives of the unions asking them to declare a dispute in the whole motor industry in Britain. They also demanded that the Labour Party bring pressure on the government to end the credit-squeeze, reduce purchase tax and remove all barriers on East-West trade. They also called for an enquiry into the motor industry.

In the motor industry for a considerable time now the workers have been alive to developments and determined to fight. On June 5, 1955, a joint meeting of stewards from 30 factories in the industry passed a resolution on the problems of the industry. About the same time the Midlands District of the Communist Party produced its famous policy pamphlet *Men and Motors To-day,* of which over 15,000 were quickly sold. On September 2, 1955, in Oxford, 300 delegates from 44 factories representing 225,000 workers passed the following resolution submitted by B.M.C. shop stewards:

(a) Detailed consideration to be given to all aspects of safety of operators on Automation systems.

(b) Full consultations between Unions and Management prior to the installation of new machines, on working conditions and rates of pay, with a view to obtaining a higher basic rate.

(c) Commencing with the campaign for a 40-hour week, we shall continue to fight for a progressive reduction in hours without any loss of pay, so that our standard of living shall be preserved and improved.

(d) *No sackings.* Retaining and retraining of persons displaced by Automation to be the Management's financial responsibility, with no loss in earnings for those concerned.

(e) An improved apprentice scheme to train technicians of both sexes who will be required in an Automation age.

(f) Negotiations at all levels between Managements and Unions to get agreement embodying these proposals.

(g) Also to ensure that, with the lowered cost of production due to the benefits of Automation, the cost of the article produced to be also lowered, thereby widening the market for same.

They also passed resolutions calling for the 40-hour week, three weeks holiday with pay, for lifting bans on East-West trade and for nationalisation of the industry.

The Executive of the A.E.U. took up the issue of short-time working and redundancy with the Labour Party Executive, the T.U.C. and A.E.U. parliamentary group. The executive also called a conference of unions having members affected in the motor and light industries. Representatives of over 20 separate unions

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attended on April 9, 1956, and passed a resolution among other things demanding a government enquiry into the position in the industry.

On April 24 the National Committee of the A.E.U. carried the emergency resolution (quoted by Reg Birch in the June issue of *Labour Monthly*) which, in addition to congratulating the A.E.U. E.C. on its action and setting out the policy points, added:

> This National Committee also congratulates those shop stewards and members who are actively resisting redundancy, and declares its firm support for such resistance at the point of production as it constitutes a vital and integral part of the fight for full employment and no reduction in the standard of living.

That fight is being continued. At its June meeting the Executive of the Transport and General Workers' Union took a quite strong line on the Standard dispute and instructed its national officials accordingly. The fight was taken a stage further at the Parliamentary Lobby and Lobby of the executives on Monday, July 9. The meeting of unions on July 9 recommended their respective Executives to call a strike in all B.M.C. factories unless the 6,000 workers were reinstated or adequate compensation paid. This was confirmed at a further meeting of executives on Saturday, July 14. On Tuesday, July 17, the trade union leaders walked out of the Ministry of Labour, saying that because of the employers' attitude, deadlock existed, and 'the strike goes on'.

No matter what the immediate outcome something new is happening. The workers in the motor car industries (and in others) are showing their determination not to submit quietly to unemployment brought about by Tory government policies. Some of them remember vividly the mass unemployment between the wars. All of them have experienced years of full employment and they are determined to fight to retain it. They see Ford, Vauxhall, B.M.C., Standard and the others piling up the profits and amassing colossal reserves. They see the drive to automation without regard to what is to happen to those displaced by the new mechanical monsters. They have had their demands for wage rises to meet living costs rejected in advance. The employers, in turning down the engineers' demand for a 40-hour week have made it clear that increased production from automation is to be at the workers' expense. Its benefits are to pass on to the boss. To rub it in B.M.C. callously and cold bloodedly sack 6,000 on two days' notice and the Tory government refuses to act. Well, the workers affected are acting. They expect, and must get, our support.

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A NEW ATMOSPHERE

CAMILLE HUYSMANS

[*In view of the recent meeting between a delegation of the French Socialist Party and a delegation of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the prospects opened up of further contacts which could lead towards a common outlook, we decided to approach the veteran Belgian Socialist, Camille Huysmans, whose experience as secretary of the pre-1914 Socialist International (bringing him into very close contact with the leaders of the European parties including Jean Jaurès, Keir Hardie, Sidney Webb, Bebel, and Lenin) gives him an unrivalled title to speak with authority. Camille Huysmans, as many of our readers will know from the recent international celebration of his 85th birthday, is at present Speaker of the Belgian House of Commons as well as Minister of State. The text of our telegram was as follows:*

> *Our magazine of labour unity circulating widely amongst key sections of the labour movement would keenly welcome from you an article of one thousand words on prospects international working class co-operation.*

To his reply, printed below, we have appended the joint communiqué (of May 12) of the delegations.—E.D., L.M.]

WHAT interests me above all—since the recent events—is the question whether it will be possible, in the near future, to re-establish throughout the world the working class unity which existed and seemed durable before the first world war and which the misunderstandings of 1917 not only wrecked but transformed into mutual hostility.

This hope is permissible on condition that on both sides an effort is made at mutual understanding right away, so as to avoid new misunderstandings which might degenerate into latent enmity.

I am one of those who firmly believe that Soviet Russia is going through a crisis of a political character which may lead to a desirable rapprochement of an indefinite scope, if for our part we abandon the attitude—systematically adopted by some—of facile irony or systematic incredulity, often based on a distortion of reality.

I do not believe that any dictatorial régime in Eastern or Southern Europe will survive for long.

I believe that a democratic régime will inevitably be imposed wherever the working class becomes conscious of its strength and of its destiny. As for the rest, I am certain that a working class understanding in Europe will create a new atmosphere, which will bring forward new men and new governments.

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I apologise for having only an act of faith to offer you, but if I have rightly understood the text of your telegram, this act of faith answers the question you have put to me.

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ OF DELEGATIONS OF THE C.P.S.U. AND THE FRENCH SOCIALIST PARTY

The delegation of the French Socialist Party (S.F.I.O.), led by its general secretary, Pierre Commin, member of the Council of the Republic, visited the U.S.S.R. at the invitation of the central committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from April 28 to May 14. The delegation included Georges Brutelle, assistant general secretary of the S.F.I.O.; members of the party's steering committee Andre Philip, Robert Coutant (Deputy of the National Assembly), Lucien Peyrassol, Lamine Gueye and Marceau Pivert; Deputies of the National Assembly Maurice Deyxonne (secretary of the Tarn department S.F.I.O. federation) and Robert Verdier; Charles Naveau, member of the Council of the Republic; Oreste Rosenfeld, member of the Assembly of the French Union and Christian Caillieret, the party's administrative secretary.

After giving detail of programme and itinerary, the communiqué goes on :

During their stay in Moscow, the S.F.I.O. delegation met and had talks with a delegation of the central committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union consisting of Comrades N. S. Khrushchov, A. I. Mikoyan, M. A. Suslov, D. T. Shepilov and B. N. Ponomaryov.

On May 12, the S.F.I.O. delegation had its final talk with members of the presidium of the central committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Comrades N. A. Bulganin, L. M. Kaganovitch, G. M. Malenkov, A. I. Mikoyan, V. M. Molotov, M. G. Pervukhin, M. Z. Saburov, M. A. Suslov and N. S. Khrushchov, and secretaries of the central committee, Comrades L. I. Brezhnev, D. T. Shepilov, E. A. Furtseva and A. B. Aristov.

"Le Monde" (May 15) quotes the remainder of the communiqué thus :

'The hope was expressed that in assessing the situation in the two countries, and also in the examination of the parties' different ideological positions, each party would show the utmost regard for objectivity, avoiding unjust attacks on each other detrimental to an appropriate mutual understanding.

'The delegations of the C.P.S.U. and the S.F.I.O. agreed to raise before the central committees of their parties the question of further contacts between the parties on problems touched on at the talks in Moscow and pertaining to the vital interests of the working class and the peoples of France and the U.S.S.R. These interests are connected in the first instance with the lessening of international tension and the strengthening of the cause of peace. The talks took place in a friendly atmosphere and with complete frankness on both sides.

'The central committee of the C.P.S.U. expressed a desire that 50 or 60 socialist workers would spend their holidays this summer in the U.S.S.R. together with Soviet workers, when they could obtain personal knowledge of the life of the Soviet people'.

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TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND THE WHITE PAPER

CHARLES HARRINGTON

THE lack of popularity of successive Tory Ministers of Education with both teachers and the Labour movement can be readily understood. It is, however, much less obvious why the Federation of British Industries and such august papers as *The Times* and the *Financial Times* find so little to applaud in what should be the most important educational step taken since the 1944 Education Act—the publication of the White Paper on Technical Education,* with its proposals purporting to remedy Britain's universally recognised shortage of technologists. Whilst welcoming the decision on a heavier capital programme, their criticisms were voiced at once:

> The present paper collects together a good deal of background information; it contains interesting reflections on the popularity of scientific toys and the value of technical education for domestic happiness. But 'the plan', though well stretched out, is so general and so adumbrated as to suggest that it was produced in something of a hurry.
>
> (*Financial Times*, March 1, 1956.)

> No greater mistake could be made than to assume that the Government have only to work out the White Paper policies and all will be well. . . . The whole hangs on a network of voluntary decisions which have to be taken in the national interest by a host of individuals.
>
> (*The Times*, March 1, 1956.)

When *The Times* speaks of the 'national interest' one would assume this to be the interest of the capitalist class. A Tory Minister of Education is also presumed to act on behalf of the capitalist class. The discord between the *Financial Times* and the Government gives expression to divisions of opinion within the capitalist class regarding the development of technical education. (There are other differences relating to trade with the socialist countries, or economic and political relations with the present and former colonies which are beyond the scope of this article.) Typical attitudes and points of view might be given in this way. There are those whose fear of a scientifically educated people overrides even their fear of other capitalist competitors. They put, as Chamberlain did, international class interests over national ones. There are those who would like

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to see Chaplin's 'Modern Times' come true, routine without skill. And again, the traditionalists, found in thousands and thousands of smaller works, who think that what was good enough for their fathers is good enough for them.

But the new great monopolies are industries in fierce competition with foreign companies such as sections of engineering, electrical, civil engineering, steel, etc., as well as a host of 'new' industries who continuously translate research into mass production. Such are synthetic fibres and materials—nylon, terylene, orlon, polythene; electronics and aircraft; chemical products. All these industries *need* a high level of research executed on a very large scale and they use highly competent technologists and technicians at the manufacturing stages. Their point of view is well put by Sir Frederick Bartlett writing in *The Manager* of January, 1956:

> It seems that when mass production methods became widely established, industrialists in this country very largely lost whatever interest they had in training. The main aim was to reduce working operations to a small number of highly stereotyped movements. . . .
>
> I believe this is a mistake. If the world manages to keep the peace, we are going to move into a period of industrial competition keener than we have ever known . . . we shall need a working population which is not merely efficient in highly-specialised and routine skill processes, but one which is swiftly adaptable.

The Minister in his White Paper tries to sit on the fence, leaning over a little towards progress. He has been pushed into this position by the belated realisation of technical advances in other countries, but especially in the Soviet Union. In this country some four per cent. of each age group receive a higher education at university or major technical college compared to ten per cent. in the Soviet Union. Or in engineering terms:

	U.K. (*per million*)		*S.U.* (*per million*)
3-year Graduate Engineers ..	57	$5\frac{1}{2}$-year Graduate Engineers ..	280
5-year part-time Technologists (H.N.C.)	164	4-year Technologists	326

Sir Winston found this position so alarming that he devoted a, now famous, speech to it. The Percy Committee made its recommendation more than 10 years ago.

The White Paper on Technical Education sets out to remedy this. The Government have sanctioned the expenditure of £70 million over the next five years and exempted this sum from 'cuts, delays and postponements of any kind'. It confirms the recognition of a number of colleges as 'Colleges of Advanced Technology' and it

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has encouraged the award of a new 'Diploma of Technology' which is to have equivalent standing to a degree. Beyond that all is pious hope. The Government proposes to raise the capacity of advanced courses in technical colleges from 500 to 1,500 'as soon as possible'. It hopes that more and more employers will release young people for 'sandwich courses' and State Scholarships will be tenable at technical colleges as well. The means test will stay and this will virtually force industry to pay for their employees. It is hoped that industry will pay their students fees and maintenance, release personnel for teaching, make gifts of equipment, pay for the building of hostels and take more interest in the colleges by appointing prominent people onto the governing bodies. Industry is also expected to help in the formulation of courses. Unless the trade unions exert their influence very strongly here, there is a danger that the technical colleges may be completely dominated by the industries of the locality.

There are many more hopes expressed in the White Paper. Hopes that part-time day release will increase, hopes that more girls will take up scientific careers, hopes that 'further education will help and not hinder the prospects of a happy married life', hopes that more teachers will be found, and hopes that libraries will improve. Many of these hopes are ill founded. There are not enough competent teachers in the colleges, or science teachers in the schools. Those in industry who would be competent to teach at such an advanced level are unlikely to be spared in great numbers. They would in any case not wish to jeopardise their careers in the works by devoting too much time and thought to teaching. Only a major national campaign based on the schools and backed by substantially higher salaries could seriously change the position. Certainly Mr. Henderson Stewart's ideas for Scotland won't get him very far:

> When the proposed extended facilities for technical education are fully in operation, it is estimated that a further 500 to 600 full-time teachers will be required. It is hoped that these teachers will be recruited from among the present large number of part-time further education teachers, from industry, and *from among school teachers.* (My italics, C.H.)
>
> (*Hansard,* March 13, 1956.)

Day release is supposed to increase by 50 to 100 per cent. Yet the engineering, ship building and electrical goods industries which are those most concerned with the training of craftsmen and technicians, already release 90 per cent. of their boys under 18. We shall have to *hope* that the distributive trades, agriculture and other

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large employers of boys will voluntarily grant day release to large numbers of them.

Most important of all are the prospective students. Entry qualifications to 'Sandwich' courses are virtually the same as for university except that a good Ordinary National Certificate will serve as well. But even now some 200 places in some of the less sought after Applied Science Departments at universities are not taken up. Many Technical Colleges would with existing facilities gladly run 'Sandwich' courses if the students were forthcoming. The proposals made by the recently retired Under Secretary would merely redistribute students already at college, *e.g.*, by drawing students from other courses, like the Higher National Certificate, into 'Sandwich' courses, but the total number of technologists would not substantially increase.

There can never be a full expansion of technical education while primary and secondary education is run on a shoe string financially and based on the restrictive ideological considerations of an ineducable majority. If there is to be a pyramid of education which exploits national ability to the full it must have a base which includes all children and not only those in grammar and technical school with a few from 'A' streams from modern schools thrown in for good measure. The fact that even now nearly a quarter of all Higher National Certificate holders in Mechanical Engineering, a qualification akin to a pass degree, come from Secondary Modern Schools and have worked for several years of evening study, gives a fair indication of the wealth of untapped talent going to waste. Industrialists are beginning to see this and among those who desperately need the extra technologists there are some who have to swallow their political prejudices and recognise that the Comprehensive School is the only satisfactory answer.

Technical education in Britain more than in any other capitalist country offers opportunities of starting at the bottom and reaching the highest qualifications. But opportunities for starting are based on the class structure of education. The Government has done nothing to remove these, the Labour movement must. In this fight there are allies to be found not only in wide sections of the middle class, but among the 'captains of industry'.

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THE NEW 'SOCIALISM'

SANCHO PANZA

REVOLUTION IN TRANSPORT HOUSE

Mr. Gaitskell is clucking in great good humour as he sees the policy of the Labour Party fashioned and moulded to his own design. The Party is in the process of being given a new direction and a new philosophy, conveniently retailored for the Gaitskell era.—*Sunday Times*, 24.6.56.

I AM delighted to note that for the next battle with the Tories the modern socialist leaders have resurrected the old revolutionary battle-cry '*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*'. It does not, of course, sound quite so good when translated into modern socialist English as 'Personal Freedom, Equality of Opportunity and Fellowship' (Brotherhood probably sounded a bit mawkish, a bit foreign and a bit awkward in relation to masters and men).

Mr. Gaitskell has apparently decided to defeat the Tories at their own game. The battle-cry with which the Tories won power in 1951 was 'Individual Freedom, Equal Opportunity and Fellowship'. The Liberals have waxed indignant at this purloining of their slogans. 'As if Labour "freedom" were somehow superior to Conservative and Liberal "freedom"', complained the *Manchester Guardian*. A Tory wag, on the contrary, was delighted: 'if both the parties are going to compete in defending our liberties life will be really worth living'. There are bound to be some differences on the meaning of these words, but who am I to sort these out? I leave it to the electorate.

To implement the revolutionary slogans new, practical, sound and realistic policies are being worked out which no doubt will solve some of our immediate problems. I do not deny Mr. Gaitskell the ability to administer, even better than the Tories, our modern society which according to the modern Socialists, is 'neither capitalist nor socialist'.

When the leaders of the Labour Party embarked on thinking and reviewing the past, I hopefully imagined that they at last had woken up to the fact that after years and years of ardent self-sacrificing work by the Labour Party, capitalism is still flourishing in Britain; and that many of the reforms for which the Party had worked and which have been of immediate advantage to the people, have also served to bolster up capitalism. Now that the purpose of 'rethinking' has become clear I frankly admit my fond illusion. I realise now that the policy makers of the

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SPAIN · 1936

Barricades in Catalonia

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Miners and Peasants of the Asturias

From the series of woodcuts by the Spanish artist, HELIOS GOMEZ, illustrating the heroic struggles of the working people of Spain against the fascist forces. GOMEZ actually did these drawings whilst imprisoned by the fascists in a floating hulk in the port of Barcelona.

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Labour Party had temporarily dried up on new 'socialist' ideas for making capitalism palatable to the people. Nationalisation of unprofitable industries had been accomplished. There were no more 'problem children' (Gaitskell) in industry left. The Welfare State and full employment were considered to be firmly established. The redistribution of income was proceeding satisfactorily. The Progressive Tories were able cheerfully to step in and to take over with little trouble the administration of the Welfare State and other 'socialist achievements'. It is now taken for granted that the limit of social reform has been reached, or, as it is sometimes put, that 'Keir Hardie's ideals have been achieved'. The problem now, as Mr. Griffiths said at the Labour Party Conference, 'would be to get a policy which would go onward from security and to adjust our thinking and apply our principles to the new environment our success has created'.

There seems to be some more or less friendly disagreement between the Labour and Tory leaders as to who actually produced the modern era, whether it was the Labour Government or the Tory Government. 'Just look at modern industry!' exclaims Mr. Macmillan, 'look at the rising production. Look at the new methods and the new ideas! Now socialism hasn't done this!' The Tories also claim a hand in the Welfare State and full employment. I wish they would settle the point.

There are bewildering and contradictory statements among the modern socialists as to the character of the modern era which has compelled them to rethink socialism. But they seem all to agree that 'the old genus (capitalism) has produced a strange new species' and that therefore

> The simple, direct and unique relationship between wholesale nationalisation and the ultimate ideals of socialism . . . cannot be assumed in the new circumstances today.
>
> (Gaitskell, *Observer*, 5.2.56.)

What then are the strange features of our strange new society? The most relevant feature seems to be that the relation of capital and labour has fundamentally changed.

> Economic power is no longer a characteristic fruit of property owning.
>
> (*Socialist Commentary*, January, 1956.)

The fact that much capital remains privately owned, that 4 per cent of the population still holds two-thirds of all property, that profits are made as before, and rent and interest drawn, is considered irrelevant and immaterial, since the owners have practically

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abdicated their power and are sharing it with the trade unions and the state. Social classes in the modern era have practically vanished and old inequalities diminished. Though it seems that new class distinctions have appeared among the workers—an upper, a middle and a lower class. Only the lower class is supposed to be prone to succumb to the lures of the 'old-fashioned' socialism. (*Twentieth Century Socialism*).* In the modern era 'we now have a rate of economic growth which, although not fast enough to satisfy some austere perfectionists, is certainly fast enough to eliminate poverty and sustain a rapid rise in working class income' (Crosland). The new generation 'has all the jobs it wants and more money in its pockets to spend on pleasure'. In the modern era of full employment, high wages and security there is little discontent, only demands for better quality, more 'gracious' living and more consideration for moral, ethical and spiritual values are valid. (*Twentieth Century Socialism*).

It seems that there is nothing wrong in the modern era that warrants the aim of common ownership or nationalisation of industry, and that cannot be put right by propaganda for socialist ideals and by some pertinent reforms.

MODERN SOCIALISM?

> It would be wrong to suggest that Mr. Gaitskell dilutes his socialism out of recognition—*The Times*, 24.12.55.

The most curous thing about modern socialism—and I do not only mean 'Twentieth Century Socialism'—is that it proceeds, not from a critique of capitalism as a basis and justification of socialism, but from a critique of socialism as a basis and justification of a mongrel capitalist society to which a halo of socialism is attached. The recognisable features of Mr. Gaitskell's socialism are his socialist ideals when expressed in one-word sentences. But when elaborated, the ideals seem to lose their socialist content.

At the Labour Party Conference in 1955 Mr. Gaitskell said:

> I find it extraordinary that in our party some people should all the time be suspicious of any attempt to analyse what the word socialism means.

I wonder why they are suspicious. Is it that the innumerable attempts made to re-define socialism have had the same object, namely to induce the Labour Party to abandon its official aim and object? This aim is usually expressed in the demand for

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the nationalisation of basic industries. This the modern socialists have rejected on the ground that the causes of remaining social inequalities are found in other than economic factors, that common ownership might lead to communism and that anyway nationalisation is an undemocratic measure. Not that nationalisation might not be useful if some industry should become unprofitable to private owners. The view has also been advanced that common ownership has never really been the policy of the Labour Party. By the way, I find it very curious, why Mr. Gaitskell deems it necessary to say in practically every speech he makes that 'nationalisation to me is a means to an end and not an end itself'. With whom is he arguing? Surely not with the members of his own party to whom nationalisation has meant nothing more than a first step towards a socialist society. Or is he arguing with himself after his experience in the Labour Government?

The redefinition of 'socialism' is proceeding apparently satisfactorily. The modern socialists have decided to redefine it in terms of a set of social and ethical aspirations duly accompanied with 'new diagnoses and prescriptions' (*Socialist Commentary*).

> Socialism is about equality. Socialism is about freedom. Socialism is about fellowship.

In pursuit of realism and not to be left behind, Mr. Morrison has produced the following definition fit for the 'mid-twentieth century':

> Socialism means the assertion of social responsibility for matters which are properly of social concern . . . Socialism does not consist of nationalisation alone. It has other and very important aspects.

Mr. Crossman thinks that the socialist case must be based on

> the defence of personal freedom and personal responsibility in a managerial society.

An older definition of Mr. Dalton that

> Socialism is a quantitative thing. It is not a question of all or nothing, but of less or more

seems to sum up admirably both the modern and realistic schools of socialism.

What is there 'new' about these definitions? Frankly I do not know. When you study the 'new diagnoses and prescriptions' there seems to be nothing that makes the modern socialists different from the good old 'right wing' except that they are more so, and except for their mid-twentieth century jargon. With this jargon

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they hope to win the respect and support of the electorate and 'terrorise' the less educated rank and file to accept the 'new prescriptions'.

Judging from their economic and social 'prescriptions' the aim of the modern socialists cannot be a socialist society where the exploitation of the working people is ended and a new socialist civilisation created. Their aim seems to be a benevolent capitalist society where the continued existence of a working class is taken for granted. A society where the workers will be cunningly tied to the apron strings of private employers and the capitalist state with a little better treatment, with some sharing of the spoils made from the working class as a whole and with a successful administration of doses of passive middle class ideology. It seems that in this new kind of 'socialist society' classes will continue to exist, but 'snobbery and class privileges' will have been gradually abolished.

This new 'socialist society' will be achieved through some more mixing of our modern already well mixed economy where private ownership rubs shoulders with some public ownership and a few nationalised industries. When Mr. Gaitskell demands some more public ownership in the mixture he makes clear that this 'must not be identified with nationalisation'. He wants to make the state a proper businessman or an industrialist to compete or enter into partnership with private enterprise. *Twentieth Century Socialism* explains that

> The reason why a socialist economy requires a private sector is because socialists place a value on individual freedom.

Some wicked people might interpret this statement as implying freedom to make profit from the labour of other people. But we must remember that profits nowadays are not made from labour, as 'the relation of Capital and Labour has fundamentally changed'. On the question when socialism will arrive the modern socialists indignantly reply:

> As if anyone could tell in advance the precise mathematical proportion of the economy which must be publicly owned before 'socialism' has arrived!
>
> (*Twentieth Century Socialism.*)

We know that we must patiently wait for a very, very long time although socialism all over the world is advancing in seven league boots. But our socialist ideals may probably begin to materialise gradually at any time now.

One can, of course, legitimately ask why the modern socialists use the word 'socialism' at all, or expressions like socialist ideals,

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socialist principles, socialist fundamental faith. The only answer I can suggest is because probably they haven't found another name for their politics which somehow must differ from the Conservatives. They can't possibly continue to call themselves Liberals or Radicals or simply democrats. A new name like 'Progressive Labourites' wouldn't sound at all good in the ears of the middle class voter. Anyway, this isn't my headache.

If there should be any inconsistencies, unclearnesses or unfairnesses in this article they are mainly due to the subject matter—if you know what I mean. The following quotation might help to throw a light on the character of modern or twentieth century socialists:

> Socialists seem to talk one way and act another, with a schizophrenia that has upset themselves, bewildered their friends and played into the hands of their enemies.
>
> (*Twentieth Century Socialism.*)

The modern socialists would be well advised to take to heart Mrs. Gaitskell's praise recently bestowed on Labour women:

> They do not juggle with ideas.

THE BATTLE FOR THE LABOUR PARTY

> Whatever may happen to economic systems capitalism and socialism as social philosophies remain as fire and water; they do not mix.—*Twentieth Century Socialism.*

The aim of the Twentieth Century and Mid-Twentieth Century socialists seems to be to make the Labour Party a proper and responsible alternative Government Party, unhampered by any nonsense about socialism, but guided by socialist ideals acceptable to the electorate at large. These socialists have put themselves into a strategic position in the middle of the Labour Party well away, as they say, from the so called 'doctrinaires' (left wing) and the 'empiricists' (right wing). They could be called 'progressive socialists' in line with the 'progressive conservatives'. I find an extraordinary closeness in their philosophies and have come reluctantly to the conclusion that the modern socialists in working out their philosophy have been deeply inspired by 'New Conservatism', a publication by the Conservative Party. One could state almost with confidence that both philosophies represent two sides of the same penny. True, a bright new penny fit for the new era, but for all that a penny.

I have no room to recount all the common principles and beliefs, but here are some of them. Both these schools of thought are very

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'idealistic' and stress the moral, ethical and spiritual values at the expense of material aspirations. Both abhor common ownership and consider it dangerous to personal freedom. Both fear that socialism might lead to communism. Both are very concerned about the individual in society. Both disapprove of too much state interference. Both want private initiative in industry and argue that there is nothing inherently wrong in profit making. Both believe that the economic power of property owners is already curbed by the trade unions, the state and the managers. Both are against extremes in riches and poverty and ostentatious expenditure by the upper class. Both believe in 'enlargement of opportunities' (more ladders) rather than equal opportunities. Both believe in the Welfare State and full employment. Both believe in better understanding between masters and men. Both approve of co-partnership and similar schemes in industry. Both want a better 'status' for the worker and stress his responsibilities rather than his rights. Both want to convince the worker that he works for the community and not for the boss. Both disapprove of the increased power of the trade unions and want it to be used to make the worker more amenable. Both believe in fellowship, especially in industry. Both believe in a wider spread of private property. Both visualise a future society of some kind of property-owning-democracy, either on the model of American 'People's capitalism', or on the model of the Swedish petty-bourgeois paradise, or in the form of a special British variety of a mongrel society based on a mixed economy. This new society could be called a 'property-owning-social-democracy'.

The 'progressive Socialists' and the 'progressive Tories' may sometimes differ in practical measures and means of achieving this society and in some immediate policies, but I am here concerned only with their philosophy. The progressive Tories failed to convey their ideas to the working people, but the modern socialists are in a better position to do so, as they are in the middle of the Labour Party. As the modern Socialists advance in the Labour Party the fear is growing that

> The working class is steadily losing its principal means of political expression. The Labour Party, like the Conservatives, increasingly speaks to the workers, not for them.
>
> (Tom Burns, *New Statesman and Nation*, 7.4.56.)

Who are the modern socialists? Apart from some 'very realistic' older national and local leaders, who do not want to be 'old-fashioned', and a few trade union leaders, they seem to be mainly

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university dons and public school products, professional men, journalists and various experts on economic and social questions. Their vigorous activity inside the Labour Party has begun to worry, not only the rank and file members, but also former staunch supporters of the middle class element. Mr. Morrison speaking at a miners' meeting found it necessary to give the following warning:

> In choosing Labour candidates the party should see that the working class has its share. I have always wanted our Labour Party to be broad-based, but we are a little in danger of becoming a bit too much of a public school and university Labour Party.
>
> (*The Times*, 25.6.56.)

Even the Conservatives are worried about this state of affairs in the Labour Party. They would like to see some difference, at least in the composition of the Parliamentary Labour Party, or else the two party system might get discredited.

FROM THE *LABOUR MONTHLY* OF 25 YEARS AGO

CRISIS

An economic crisis tends to pass into the acute phase of a financial crisis when a particularly large part of the previous capital investment has taken the form of short-term loans or credits. Such short-term loans can be withdrawn by the lenders as swiftly as they were created; and there will be the strong motive to do this in order to cover losses on 'frozen' long-term investments or to support 'bear' speculation on a 'slumping' stock-market. To such a movement of withdrawal the banking system will be particularly sensitive, since banks are the depositories of liquid savings (their deposits) as well as lenders of short-term credits to industry. If they meet the situation by contracting the credits that they have made to industry and the stock exchange, they aggravate the situation and may precipitate a 'crash'. If they do not, they may themselves be caught insolvent because they have lent more than they themselves can 'raise'. Whether or not such a sharp purgative as universal bankruptcies works on the situation, contracted activity and employment and 'slumping' prices tend to continue until 'costs' (*i.e.* wages and the *rentier*-interest rate) are reduced to a level at which *entrepreneur* profit is restored to a 'normal' level. This, in fact, is the rôle which unemployment and trade depression play in capitalist economy.

From *The Crisis in Germany*, by Maurice Dobb, August, 1931.

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LETTERS FROM MRS. MARX

[We begin this month the first publication in English, as promised in our March issue, of the recently discovered Marx family letters. We acknowledge our indebtedness to our Italian friends, Professors Saitta and Del Bo, for putting this rich material at our disposal. The letters from Marx's wife (Jenny von Westphalen) from 1862 onwards to her correspondents have a special interest both for their reflexion of life in the Marx family circle, often under hard conditions, and for the glimpse given of the troubles attending the composition and publication of the first volume of Capital. *The translations are by Clemens Dutt.—Ed., L.M.]*

9 Grafton Terrace,
Maitland Park.
[written end of 1862.]

DEAR MRS. MARKHEIM,[1]

I have just received your friendly letter and I hasten to thank you for the bill of exchange you sent, which I shall at once cash in the City this morning. How much I appreciate your sympathy and your interest in our experiences ! I am writing these lines in great haste in order to beg you not to take any further steps among your Liverpool relatives. It could be unpleasant for Engels and you can have no idea how particular my husband is in such matters. Owing to an unfavourable contract, Engels is still very much tied up and hampered for the time being and he has to be very careful in money matters. For all that you have wanted to do for us I am just as thankful to you as if your desires had become reality, and I know that you are not so far off and that your acts are indeed as you would have liked them to be. Just now, and as long as this terrible American crisis[2] afflicts us, any gift, even the smallest, is very welcome to me, especially coming from such loyal, honest hands as yours.

I hope with all my heart that your little Jenny will soon recover, and that she will be as flourishing with you as our own dear little Jenny. I am convinced that you would rejoice at the sight of our truly charming little girl and would find it as painful as I do that this heavy pressure comes just in the very springtime of her life and that her little heart's desires and hopes are already being nipped in the bud.

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Please let me hear from you again soon and be sure that I always think of you with deepest love.

Your JENNY MARX.

[1]Berta Markheim, of an orthodox Jewish family, came in contact with the Communist League (for which the Communist Manifesto was written) and in 1854 visited London and became friendly with the Marx family.

[2]Owing to the American civil war (1861-1865) Marx lost his source of income as correspondent to the *New York Daily Tribune*.

Hampstead.

January 28, 1863.

DEAR MRS. MARKHEIM,

From the bottom of my heart I thank you for your kindness and friendship. You cannot imagine how much you have helped me by your speedy sendings and how much good you have done to me by your whole kind, impulsive behaviour, which has done away with everything oppressive and painful in my position in relation to you. It was truly a stroke of luck that you did not write to Liverpool, which I think would have caused much inconvenience. But the confidence that you and Dr. K.[1] have reposed is certainly quite justified and I do not feel in any way humiliated in relation to a man who has such a high opinion of my husband and who realises the quite exceptional circumstances that press upon us and what extraordinary absorption is required to complete, amidst all the struggles and cares and privations, a theoretical work[2] such as that which it is to be hoped will now before long see the light of day.

Today, I walked to the City in a joyful mood, found my house in Bread Street at once and filled my purse with the £'s which were immediately given to me in exchange for my certificate. If you were to think of me once again, don't worry about my having to go to the City on foot; in spite of everything I am still good at walking and have always been an old Party messenger or errand runner.

Let me, however, once for all correct the Münchhausen stories. We have not had a legacy from Holland, nor have we bought a house, nor visited Berlin, nor any such tricks.

All these things are untrue; on the other hand, I will tell you something that has happened to us which may perhaps have given rise to the above fairy stories. You won't be angry if I go back rather far and take you back some ten years to our old Dean Street[3] and the little room which was then our home. I have already told

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you how our little Eleanor[4] was born shortly before the death of our beloved only boy, Edgar[5]. Coffin and cradle stood close together, you can imagine how wet from tears were the first and last resting places of our children and how willingly we would have left the desolate, terrible room that held all our joy and pain; but we had no luck and we had to remain there for a whole year or more, when an old relative in Scotland died and we inherited a small sum of about £150-£200. My grandmother, the mother of my dear dead father, was Scottish by birth and in fact came from one of the first Scottish families, the Campbell and Argyle family. The Duke of Argyle is a close relation of my forebears and my dear mother when I married gave me a great deal of magnificent silverware which originated from Scotland and bore the Argyle arms. The silver and the arms have, of course, long ago gone the way of all flesh in the course of all our expulsions, wanderings and emigrations 'from the blue-bed to the brown', and the little that I have been able to save from the shipwreck is still always hovering on the brink of death and is usually in the hands of the pawnbroker. But after this long sentence about silver and forefathers, to come back to our muttons, the before-mentioned legacy. To put it shortly, with the money left us we paid our departure from Dean Street and with a joyous heart moved to a tiny house at the foot of the romantic Hampstead Heath, not far from the pretty Primrose Hill. When for the first time we slept in our own beds, sat on our own chairs and even possessed a parlour with second-hand furniture in rococo style, or rather bric-a-brac, we truly thought that we were living in a magic castle and that there were drums and trumpets to do homage to our youthful magnificence. In the little house that we then rented our three dear girls are still living and flourishing and if the word 'beautiful' does not describe them, I must still say, even at the risk of being laughed at for a mother's vanity, that all three are very nice-looking and interesting. Little Jenny[6] is strikingly dark, not only in hair and eyes but also in the colour of her skin, and looks very piquant with her childish rosy cheeks and deep, sweet eyes. Laura,[7] who in every way is several degrees lighter and fairer, is really prettier than the elder sister because her features are more regular and her shining green eyes with their dark eyebrows and long eyelashes always sparkle with a joyful fire. Both the girls are of more than medium height and are very finely built and nicely shaped. The one thing of which Jenny is just a little vain is her tiny hands and small feet. Otherwise both girls are of a truly endearing modesty and maidenly shyness

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and it does not stand out that both of them by talent and industry reached a certain culture.

We have done all that was in our power for their education. Unfortunately, as regards music, we could not do as much for them as we would have liked and they are not particularly good performers, but they have very nice voices and sing with very good expression. Little Jenny's main talent, however, is for elocution and since the child has a very beautiful voice, 'low and sweet', and has been a fanatical student of Shakespeare from childhood, she has had a deep inclination towards the theatre and in fact would long ago have gone on the stage if it were not that considerations of family, etc., etc., have so far kept her away from it. Many who have heard her assert that she has the makings of a Rachel or Ristori and that it is wrong to make her give up the idea. Nor would we have put any obstacles in the way if she had been physically stronger; unfortunately, she is very delicate and during this last year she has taken our circumstances too much to heart.

Please, dear Mrs. Markheim, do not reply to me on this point and on what I have told you about the girls. They are both so particular and they would not be pleased if they had any idea that I had told you so much. So let us keep it to ourselves. The third one, the youngest, is a real embodiment of loveliness, grace and childish drollery. She is the life and soul of the household. All three children are wholly devoted to London and in manners, customs and inclinations, in way of life and habits, they have become completely English and nothing would be more terrible to them than the idea of having to exchange England for Germany, and to tell you the truth, I too, even I, would be afraid of it. Only under very special circumstances, should I care to see our own Fatherland again, the *mater dolorosa* of the poets. To go back at the present time would have no advantages for us. Dear as it is in London, I still believe that we live here more cheaply than we could in Germany. In addition, we have a little credit here, we have a small, very cheap house, and above all, London is so enormous that one disappears in it. Here the individual counts for nothing, and for that very reason one ceases to be important to oneself and others, one can withdraw into oneself, into one's snail-shell, and no one will worry about you, whereas in Germany they know next morning what there was on the table and what your husband's income is. But, for heaven's sake, how I have begun to chatter! I must quickly draw to a close or I shall be

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starting on my third sheet, so I have only a few lines left to say how happy I am that your little Jenny is well again, and to assure you, once more, of all my thankfulness and friendship and I shall always be

Your JENNY MARX.

[1]Dr. Ludwig Kugelmann (1830-1902). Physician in Hanover and socialist with whom Marx corresponded.

[2]*Das Kapital,* Volume I of which appeared in 1867.

[3]The Marx family lived at 28, Dean Street, Soho, from end of 1850 to September 22, 1856, when they moved house as related in the letter.

[4]Eleanor Marx (1856-1898), youngest daughter of Karl Marx.

[5]Edgar (1847-1853), Marx' son.

[6]Jenny Marx (1844-1883), Marx' eldest daughter. Married Charles Longuet in 1873.

[7]Laura Marx (1846-1911), Marx' second daughter. Married the French socialist Paul Lafargue in 1868.

Hampstead,

February 12, 1863.

DEAR MRS. MARKHEIM,

How kind and good of you to think of me once again, and together with my dear husband too! Thus both our lords and masters join our alliance, for although I wrote my first letter without my husband's knowledge, you will understand, dear Mrs. Markheim, that I could not later on keep our correspondence, and your speedy and kind help, a secret from him. Indeed, I can't very well keep anything from him for a long time and then, too, he would have been bound to be surprised at my secret sources of help; for I can hardly tell you how much assistance you have given me, how many needs you have helped to satisfy, how many little enjoyments I have been able to provide for our family circle owing to you.

I found the Ladenburg house very easily and was at once given all the money without any deduction, although the bill of exchange was only due to be paid in six months' time. The money came just on my birthday and is for me a lovely link with you.

That you want to have copies made of my husband's photograph has given him and the children great pleasure; only they all think that it is not a good photograph and the girls very much want to have another made. At the moment, however, that would not be advisable, as for some days past Karl has been suffering from an eye infection which has quite distorted his features. The many troubles and torments of the recent period, together with arduous night work and compilation of statistical tables, are probably the immediate cause of it. I am hoping that it will soon

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pass. I shall go to Herr Schröder in the next few days. It is so difficult to get my husband to make such visits, however, I hope to induce him to do so. Please excuse me for writing so briefly and hastily, but I am very busy today. With the spring approaching there is so much to sew and mend, and since we are our own brewers, cooks and cellarers, tailors, laundry and shoe repairers, all our hands are always full; so with the most cordial greetings from all of us to you and your husband; and, hoping for your continued sympathy and friendship, I am with deepest love,

Your JENNY MARX.

London.
July 6, 1863.

DEAR MRS. MARKHEIM,

Just as we were about to sit down to table on Saturday I received a letter, the address of which was in a handwriting unknown to me. Since the letters I receive are more usually unpleasant than welcome, I was on the point of putting this foreign-looking luncheon greeting on one side. But the children said: 'Open it, perhaps there's something nice inside', and how joyfully surprised I was, and how grateful, when I found that it was an indirect sign of life and love from you, demonstrating once again your love, loyalty and sympathy for me and mine, and without any reminder from me!

I am sure it will be some satisfaction to you to hear that your unexpected gift makes it possible and easier for us to send little Jenny to the seaside, which on the recommendation of the doctor has, unfortunately, again become a sad necessity. The poor child is again suffering from a very bad cough, which neither medicines nor the warm summer weather have been able to dispel, but which we hope will be cured by sea air and bathing. Both the others are well and cheerful. Laura now accompanies her father a good deal to the British Museum, for which she has a ticket. The youngest has just passed from the stage of spelling to that of 'reading with obstacles', which, however, is not a kind of race. Grimm's fairy tales are a source of great enjoyment to her and Snow White, Wild Rose, King Thrushbeard and the Merry Brother are now the heroes of her childish fantasy.

My beloved Karl has suffered a good deal from his liver this spring, but in spite of all obstacles, his book is going forward to completion with giant strides. It would have been ready even earlier

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if he had kept to the old plan of limiting it to 20-30 printed sheets. But as the Germans only believe in 'fat' books, and the much finer achievement of concentrating and cutting out all superfluous matter is not appreciated by the worthy folk, Karl has added a lot of historical material, and it will now be a volume of 50 printed sheets that will fall like a bomb on German soil. Oh, our German soil! Abroad one is almost ashamed of being German, and still more of the honour of being Prussian! Is there anything more pitiful than the spectacle that Prussia presents? It is difficult to know which is the more miserable—the king, the ministers, the camarilla, or the servile people, and above all the miserable, cowardly, creeping silent press! One would often like to turn away with disgust from all politics, and I wish we could look at the field as pure 'amateurs', but unfortunately, it is at the same time a vital question for us.

Karl hopes to go to Germany in September. Perhaps he will also see Dr. Kugelmann then, coming also into your vicinity.

Please let us soon hear from you again directly, and accept the deepest and most grateful greetings from us all, especially from

Your JENNY MARX.

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A TOOLMAKER'S LETTER

The kind of Party Branch Secretary I should like to see

[Labour Monthly *rarely has room for detailed glimpses of life in a Soviet factory. The letter reprinted below from* Party Life, *a fortnightly journal of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (No. 7, April, 1956)—the journal has a circulation of 500,000—may serve two useful purposes. It gives a picture of the practical way in which the workers' political party functions in a Socialist country, where the means of production are all the property (and the responsibility) of society and there are no private employers to fight. At the same time it gives some insight into the problems of extending Soviet democracy—already very wide—in the new conditions which have been developing since the death of Stalin. For space reasons the letter has been considerably shortened.—Ed., L.M.*]

AFTER the XXth Party Congress you look at everything in a new way. Previously, a good deal at our place was done with a little dictation from above. If it's a secretary to be elected, they've already decided in the Party committee who it's to be. If a resolution is to be drawn up, it's already been written. If delegates have to be sent to a District conference, the list is already prepared. Although conditions now have changed, much of the past has become a habit; and it's not so easy to get rid of it.

I've been working for twenty years as a mechanic at our works, a number of years in the Party, and am a member of the Works Party Committee. I've seen comrades in my shop elected as secretary, and know the Party leaders in other shops. The defect which is particularly noticeable in many of them is probably that they don't draw all the Communists into the work that has to be done. Take our shop. Comrade Sergienko, secretary of the Party in our shop, and the shop manager, Comrade Zavalishin, complain that they have to bear the whole burden on their own shoulders. And that's true. But why does it happen?

The blame for this lies above all on Comrade Sergienko. In his work, he relies on a very small circle of people. Take for example our Party meetings during the last six months. Only questions of works management have been discussed. Whom do we see among those making reports? Only three people—the shop manager, the chief engineer Comrade Gordienko and the secretary of the Party branch. They're the ones who prepare the meetings too. After this, is there any justification for the complaints of those in charge

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of the shop that they have to do all the work on their own, if they will only work with each other?! I don't want to suggest that our Branch secretary, Comrade Sergienko, is a very bad leader. No. He tries to work properly and uses up a lot of energy. And the shop has made an advance in mastering new technology and applying new technique. We've set up a number of new machine tools, mastered and mechanised a number of previously laborious operations. But this has all been done more by pressure from above, not because all the Communists and the whole body of workers tackled the job together. As a member of the Party committee, I can't divest myself of responsibility either; but I still think that the development of activity in the Party organisation depends most of all on the secretary.

When you think nowadays what kind of person a secretary should be, you can't help thinking about Comrade Kalantayevsky. He is the secretary of the Party branch in shop M.5. I will frankly say that I like very much the way he works. Maybe he isn't the best secretary on earth, but that's not the point. One can learn something from him, though as a matter of fact he is a young man about 30. What's his strong point?

Comrade Kalantayevsky tries to work in his shop not on his own but drawing everybody in: any Communist there is given to understand that he bears responsibility for the shop, and a considerable one, even though it isn't the same as that of the Party Branch secretary or the shop manager. When there was talk about raising productivity of labour, they organised complex teams 'to widen the bottlenecks', as they called it: there were workmen and technicians in them, Communists and non-Communists. In order to find out new technical methods and novelties, advanced labour processes, they sent workmen and charge-hands to other factories, who then described in the Red Corner (shop recreation room) what they had seen. In all this what is important is that the secretary and the Party branch try to draw the whole body into solving production problems. They have the custom there, for example, of giving every Communist the job of preparing and giving a report on some question at a Party meeting. Yet previously the only speakers at their Party meetings were the shop manager, his deputy and the Branch secretary. And the same sort of thing used to happen at their general meetings of the workers.

In our works people often think that not every Communist can make a report or a detailed communication to a workers' meeting. They plead a low level of education, unpreparedness, lack of experi-

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ence. But you won't hear that in the Party branch of shop M.5. Out of sixteen Communists there, only three have not yet made reports or communications to a meeting of their comrades. The secretary looks at it this way, that every Communist should do political work. This is difficult to carry out without being formal about it. But it does get done, and only because the secretary of the Party branch carries on, as we say, very painstaking work with his people. I must confess that the word 'painstaking' seems to me hackneyed, and I would like to say 'tender'.

Let's say Comrade Kalantayevsky wants to entrust a Communist with some particular report. He has a talk with him and finds out in detail how much time he needs. He isn't worried if a Communist asks for a long time. This is a good feature; because in our works it's become a habit that every instruction has to be carried out as though there were a fire, at full speed. He helps them himself to collect the necessary literature, advises them about asking guidance at the library, etc. They have working in their shop a woman comrade, a winder, Murmylo. During her five years in the shop she had not once spoken at a workers' meeting, and very rarely speaks at Party meetings. The secretary suggested that she should prepare a report on 'What the Soviet power has done for the youth'. He was helping her for six months—and all that time this Communist woman kept coming to him and proving that nothing could come of it and refusing to do it. But not so long ago Comrade Murmylo made her report at an open meeting of the Y.C.L. She was very agitated, but the people were very satisfied. She herself was terribly surprised: 'I can't understand how I managed it, and the people pleased too!'. But she managed it because she felt a great concern for her report, thought a lot about it, and her concern communicated itself to the audience.

All this shows how much it depends on the secretary whether the Communists are active or not. There are many unrevealed forces in every person, and what a good thing it is when a Party leader helps to reveal them, and amazes a person with what he discovers in himself! Yet then people are more confident and tackle big jobs too. It seems to me that many secretaries don't think about that. He gives you a job to do, but what you experience in getting it, how you're going to carry it out, may not interest him. For example, Comrade Sergienko, our Branch secretary, considers that if not all the Communists in our shop show their activity, it's only their fault. 'I gave them the job to do but they didn't do it, what more can I do?'—that's how he often argues. For many years

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nobody has heard at Party meetings the voices of Comrades Petrenko, Tsygichko, Kruzhilin, Trubitsyn. The secretary criticises them for passivity, but doesn't want to find an approach to them and to take trouble over them.

It seems to me the trouble in many Party branches is that there the secretaries have stopped individual work with the Communists. I even think that it's not only the secretary who should be attentive to every Communist, but all the Communists to one another too. Probably on account of the rush, we don't stop to think that we are comrades in the struggle, people of a like mind. That's what it says in our Party rules. But this means, in my opinion, that we ought to give every kind of help to one another, take an interest in what we are thinking about and how we live. At present we decide all questions only at meetings, or at the Party Bureau. Rarely, hardly ever, do we meet in an unofficial atmosphere, to have an argument or to find out one another's opinions on some matter of general interest. I personally approve the idea that in shop M.5 the Communists sometimes meet just so, to have a talk, to take each other's advice or else to have an argument. In connection with the criticism of the cult of the individual, for example, some of the workers began to think that now one-man management was not necessary. The Communists exchanged opinions among themselves and explained to the workers that one-man management is essential in guiding production. The good thing was that Communists did not begin waiting for 'instructions' from above, what the 'present attitude' to one-man management is, but thought over it themselves and found the answer.

The secretary of a Party branch is a leader, the soul of the collective. People ought to be coming to him with their worries and doubts, sharing their thoughts with him. By his behaviour, his work, his independence, the secretary ought to inspire complete confidence and respect.

What secretary has not been worried over the question, how to build up proper relations with the shop manager or other people in charge of the management? Sometimes a secretary thinks it is his duty to 'tell off' the manager, and doesn't mind earning some cheap prestige thereby. He thinks that people will say of him: 'There's a fine chap, he's not afraid!' Such a secretary sometimes wants as it were to underline his devotion to principle. But I have noticed that when a secretary talks everywhere about his devotion to principle, he isn't believed very much.

Comrade Kalantayevsky usually does not argue with a shop

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manager in public, or the manager with him. I don't know whether this is bad or good. At all events they have complete mutual understanding. If someone is not in agreement, they postpone a decision and think over it. Then they meet and someone's opinion, of course with corrections, is adopted. They have a law for themselves that, once they have undertaken something, they do it. And although there are no public arguments between the secretary and the shop manager, everyone knows that the secretary has his own opinion on all questions of principle and, when necessary, will stand up for it. We can't reckon on doing everything through full-time workers. Comrade Kalantayevsky is not a full-time secretary, he works as a charge-hand, studies at a technical school, lives in a hostel but he finds time to give active guidance to the Branch. So the most important thing is to love the work and be conscientious about it.

I sum up and feel that I haven't said all that I would like. What a secretary ought to be today has probably remained unclear after all. And I could have written better about Kalantayevsky too. I hope other comrades will criticise me and will be able to supplement what I have said and express their views on the secretary of the basic Party branch. It would be very useful to discuss such a question just now.

A. ZASLAVSKY,
Toolmaker at the Kharkhov Electrical Engineering Works.

35th ANNIVERSARY GREETINGS

The following messages of greeting were unavoidably held over from last month:

From Masses and Mainstream, New York

Please accept our warmest fraternal greetings on your 35th anniversary. We in America have always looked forward to receiving *Labour Monthly*, both for its political insight and for its consistently rich intellectual quality.

From New Zealand Labour Review

For 35 years *Labour Monthly* has exercised wide influence in New Zealand Progressive circles. Palme Dutt's Notes of the Month have gained him unique prestige owing to his lucidity, scholarly approach and Marxist penetration. We wish *Labour Monthly* long years of still greater success.

From Politiek en Cultuur, Netherlands

Thirty-five years of continuous theoretical activity, theoretical guidance and practical information on problems of national liberation movements and working class struggles deserve to be celebrated by all progressive forces. And when, as in the case of *Labour Monthly*, the editorial comments were always significant and the articles had lucidity as a common characteristic, the British labour movement has a perfect right to be proud of this achievement.

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Book Reviews

THE ROSENBERGS: A RE-ASSESSMENT

The Judgment of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, by John Wexley. (672 pp. Bookville, London, *30s;* Cameron & Kahn, New York. *$6.*)

IN a small paper called *County Fair* in Fairfield County, Connecticut, there appeared recently an article expressing the anguish with which a fairly ordinary American belatedly struggles to his feet, beginning to be conscious of the fog of lies around him as a beam of truth shoots through. The author is a small-town columnist named Brett Halliday, and he has just read John Wexley's book *The Judgment of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg.* He begins by explaining that he is a good, normal American type, reasonably happy under capitalism and, as he says, 'not a bleeding-heart social reformer, not a Jew, not a Communist'. But reading Wexley's book has terrified, agonised and nauseated him. It has posed to him the question, 'What sort of America is my daughter going to grow up in?' and 'Can I, as a father, remain silent?' The answer is that he cannot, for the book virtually accuses those who staged the Rosenberg trial on behalf of his government of conspiring to murder the Rosenbergs, and none of those so accused has brought any action against the author or the publishers. Nor has anyone else protested, he says, for he has not come across a single mention of the book, either pro or con, in print.

The campaign for the Rosenbergs was described as a fraudulent and hysterical appeal to people's emotions, an attempt, as one paper said, to 'obscure the facts and forget the trial record'. Exactly the opposite was true. Those who cried out for the Rosenbergs' blood as a human sacrifice in the cold war received powerful aid from those falsely styling themselves 'liberals' who looked the other way, refusing to find out the facts and using their ignorance as an excuse for remaining silent. No one reading the record could fail to see that the case for at least clemency was overwhelmingly strong on the basis of utterly insufficient evidence, misconduct at the trial, denial of constitutional safeguards and the savagery of the sentence. It was for that reason that the facts had to be blacked out at all costs by a press which was doing the main job of intensifying hysteria and fear. The press shouted down the world clamour to spare the Rosenbergs—which was finally joined by the Pope of Rome himself—by labelling it 'Communist'.

We should not forget the part played by the press in putting them to death, partly through distortion and partly through silence. A final appeal was made, not long before the end, in the form of a paid advertisement for which thousands of widows' mites had been donated. The advertisement, signed by atomic scientist Harold Urey, Rabbi Hillel Silver and others, was offered at the usual rates to every paper in New York and turned down by every one. The committee which submitted it offered to rewrite it in any way that the *New York Times* might desire, but that paper still refused on the ground that as they said, 'some people might not like it'. The Rosenbergs died because not enough people caught a glimpse of the truth in time. The job of preventing future martyrdoms remains and it is never too late to rouse the love of mercy and truth which is latent in most human beings.

Americans who have not succumbed to the crushing campaign of

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political intimidation work under great difficulties. Under a semblance of legality which has hoodwinked many good people, most of the organisations through which public opinion could be mobilised against governmental indecencies have been weakened, some of them to the extent of paralysis or dissolution. This has been done by forcing them to expend all their resources on defending their very right to function at all. One of the organisations that do still function effectively against tremendous pressures is the committee formed to secure justice for the Rosenbergs, which is now the Committee to Secure Justice for Morton Sobell—the young scientist who, when the Rosenbergs were sentenced to death, was given life imprisonment on even less substantial evidence. Like all such groups this committee has, of course, been submitted to the political inquisition but it is still comparatively widely supported. The Sobel case remains the big unfinished business for those who took up the fight for the Rosenbergs. Sobell was sentenced to life imprisonment in Alcatraz, the harshest federal prison in America in which the most violent and unredeemable prisoners are confined. Because he was 'only' sentenced to this, the injustice is more difficult to dramatise in order to enlist wide support.

While the fight for the lives of Ethel and Julius was defeated, there was victory in that defeat by the mere fact that so many people everywhere were aroused by the call for justice, and it will be that much harder for them to be deaf to the call when it comes again. It is a measure of this victory that, while Americans continue to be jailed for their politics, there have been no further attempts at political executions. Nevertheless the fight is conducted under extraordinary difficulties. Not a single progressive political party remains on the ballot anywhere in America. Yet up to less than 11 years ago America was a country in which the great majority supported that great progressive President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Today there are many millions in every walk of life who think progressively, who love truth and justice and freedom, but who for reasons that at least seem very compelling to them dare not speak out for these things. The task of the unrepentant progressives is to persuade them to master this fear, and at the same time to convince the government that it cannot go through with an act of monstrous domestic injustice without endangering the domestic and foreign support it needs. The greatest single step toward achieving both is a public outcry in Britain, whose support in its world policies Washington must have and whose people's sense of justice and humanity most Americans deeply respect. John Wexley's fully documented book can be of the greatest help in this campaign.

CEDRIC BELFRAGE

HOMAGE TO GEORGE MEREDITH

George Meredith, by Jack Lindsay. (420 pp., The Bodley Head. *30s.*).

IN this extremely interesting book—the best, in my opinion, that he has written on a literary subject—Jack Lindsay re-examines the life and work of George Meredith and attempts to set this now almost unread novelist-poet firmly in his historical context. Meredith he sees not, as he is often considered, a rather eccentric writer, but as a very central figure in the development of the modern novel, a writer who responded more deeply than any of his British contemporaries to the

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strains and stresses of late nineteenth-century capitalism. Jack Lindsay presents us—very convincingly, I think—with a Meredith who felt in his bones and expressed in his often tortuous way the fundamental human situation of his time: that tragic inner division of the mind and impulses of men which Marx referred to as self-alienation. He brings out very clearly the influence on Meredith of his Moravian school training with its emphasis on brotherhood, his reading of Carlyle and his enthusiasm for Mazzini. He shows how very socially and politically conscious Meredith was, from the early days of the near-allegorical *Shaving of Shagpat* to the highly sophisticated analytical novels like *Beauchamp's Career* and *The Tragic Comedians*. No previous study has had anything like the full documentation or broad historical grasp of this book, so that we are made indeed to see Meredith whole and see him new and hence go back to his books with minds newly receptive to their impact.

All this is sheer gain. And it is so much that it may seem contankerous not to leave it at that. But this is a serious book and therefore invites serious criticism; and it seems to me to be worth asking why this should be not merely a valuable book but also a vulnerable one. When Virginia Woolf, thirty years ago, tried to define her dissatisfaction with the novels of some of her eminent contemporaries she expressed her sense of something lacking in the phrase 'Life escapes . . .' It is a phrase that seems to me relevant to the vulnerability of Jack Lindsay's study. There is no lack of ideas here, no shortage of stimulating and enriching propositions, and no lack of facts either. And yet something essential escapes. Can it be Meredith's novels themselves? Their *quality* as opposed to their significance? And is it not in Jack Lindsay's chapter on the novelist's style (suggestive as it undoubtedly is) that the weakness becomes most apparent? Let me put it this way. What Lindsay most excellently establishes is the historical significance of Meredith in the literary and general cultural history of our society. He reveals far more clearly and perceptively than any previous critic what Meredith was up to, what lies behind the books. What is much more doubtful is whether he convinces us that Meredith was a good novelist. Interesting undoubtedly; but effective, moving, *alive*? Certainly this quality of living art—which is, when all is said and done, the thing about a novel that really matters—is not something separable from the other facets of a book, and certainly it is easily possible to miss the essence of a book if one approaches it the wrong way. Yet if a critic is over-concerned with the ideas behind and around a novel and insufficiently attentive to the texture of the book itself his criticism will end by seeming a bit abstract, a bit schematic. Instead of life we shall feel we are being presented with ideas about life. The test, of course, is, as ever, in experience. I shall return, gratefully, to those of Meredith's novels I have read and turn with an eager interest to those I do not yet know. And it isn't, of course, a trivial feat in a literary critic to arouse such an impulse.

ARNOLD KETTLE.

INDIA

India Today and Tomorrow, by R. Palme Dutt. (304 pp. Lawrence & Wishart. *12s. 6d.*)

A BOOK published in 1940, revised in 1947 and 1949, and brought up to date in 1955, runs the risk of looking like the large country houses one

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sometimes shudders to see, built in a good century and mutilated in two or three succeeding ones. But here, although the changing scene moves more in a decade and a half than it seemed at one time to do in a century, we have the same architect throughout, to keep the progress harmonious and consistent.

Reading the book as a whole now, including the important new final chapter which carries the history of the sub-continent from independence and partition in 1947 up to early in 1955, one sees scarcely any sign of re-building, and the student of history, or of Imperialism, or of India, gets a wonderful lesson in all the basic principles—a lesson made more fascinating by the complexity of the story, with its many cross-currents, its errors, betrayals, loyalties, and glories. He can see the deep evils of Imperialism vividly described; its destructiveness and rapacity, reminding us of a bull in a china shop winding up his rampage by robbing the till and somehow grabbing the title deeds; the excuses and fallacies of its apologists exposed and refuted. And he sees, too, the truths of Socialist analysis vindicated, and the advance to Socialist victory triumphantly foreseen.

Events, and this story with them, move so fast that one almost regrets that the 'bringing up to date' could not have waited a year or two, to give us more of the bright future that is opening out for the sub-continent with the strengthening of anti-Imperialist developments everywhere, and particularly with the infectious example of the Chinese People's Republic which is so well emphasised in the concluding pages of the book. But, if one waited a year or two, there would of course be a similar reason for waiting a year or two more. History advances so quickly, not least in Asia, that one must either write out of breath, or never write at all. Mr. Dutt is, however, not out of breath; he is in good condition, and his 'second wind' helps us to learn now the essence of recent events. We can always wait a few years for another book, to teach us something more.

D. N. PRITT

COMPANION FOR ROBIN HOOD

Adventures in Bukhara, by Leonid Solovyev. (256 pp. Lawrence & Wishart. *9s. 6d.*)

ROBIN HOOD, Tyl Eulenspiegel and Khoja Nasreddin—how much of these characters is stuff of history, tradition or fiction may be left to debate. Certain it is that their adventures represent a protest, channelled partly into wish-fulfilment, against feudal tyranny, and that man's passion for justice and humanity being no less living today they remain an actual inspiration to writer and reader (and viewer). Khoja's particular enemy is Emir, not Sheriff; the scene, the East from the Mediterranean to Central Asia; the time? Medieval—my ignorance can put no finer point on it. Nevertheless, his spirit is familiar to all those who, in their youth, imaginarily trod Sherwood Forest by the side of *our* outlaw. Solovyev's version—the basis of one of the most delightful Soviet films shown here during the war years—is a trifle too clean, too ornate, too overwritten, in a word—too *pastiche*—to have the veritable flavour of a folk-tale. It is a wee bit like coming on a glittering palace of minarets and marble traceries and entering it to find yourself in the Moscow Agricultural Exhibition. Nevertheless it is excellent fun, well translated, printed and decorated, a delight to read and handle.

I.M.

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While the list is being dealt with the technique of selling becomes more developed and the securing of new readers easier. Before the week is out at least 20 new readers should be booked. Proper arrangements must be made for delivery'. 'If anyone has any doubts about this method', he goes on, 'I would ask them to try it out and *I dare them to fail*! Two friends in a given district is surely not asking for the moon. The dividend is 20 new friends and is a big contribution in helping to bring about the unity so urgently needed in the Labour movement. I am glad I tried it out, as I have now a large number of friends'.

An *Essex trade unionist,* with a record of readership closely rivalling his colleague above, chimes in: 'My wife says: "Why do we have to wait this long before we push such an excellent magazine?" That thought has had a humbling and chastening effect upon me—we have been readers for 25 years! So we have just introduced L.M. to five new readers—local government officers, workers in the gas works and a school teacher to a factory here. Here's wishing for success in rapidly extending circulation amongst the working people.'

A tribute this month from an *Octagenarian reader* to our Nonagenarian contributor (from whose message of greeting I have quoted) says: 'I re-read Fred Henderson's article in the April number. How wise and understanding he is! I liked his treatment of Bertrand Russell and his comprehensive view of our recent human history, with all of which he is familiar, and with much of which he was personally concerned. How foolish to dread old age when it is possible to gather such richness to itself'.

Postscript, from 'Midland reader': 'The inside cover was of more than usual interest to me this time and my wife was greatly impressed when I explained that I was the "Midland reader" you referred to—not so much because it was me, but because that "reader" was a real person and not an "advertisers' dummy". It proves that each one of us can help to inspire others if we only express ourselves to others instead of bottling it up.' Yes, she's right. All our readers are real persons; always very real to us at L.M.; and even more so since we met some of you in the flesh. And we're happy this time to see the wives taking a hand; but perhaps this is nothing new?

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